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ABSTRACT

In developing a blueprint for a successful laboratory school, the following elements are discussed: (1) governance of the school and its relationship to the university or college of education; (2) organization of the school (responsibilities, priorities, philosophy) and the scope of its program; (3) faculty characteristics and its relationship between faculty and administration; (4) student population and enrollment policies; and (5) school and faculty roles and responsibilities. It is emphasized that the primary function of the laboratory school is to serve as a laboratory for university teacher education programs that prepare educational personnel, and to fullfill other responsiblities which the college or university may have charged to the school. (JD)

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Laboratory Schools:
Blue Print for Success

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Campus laboratory schools have been operated and supported by teacher education institutions throughout the nation for more than a century. Like many others the school I serve, Malcolm Price Laboratory School, began its operation as a "model school" (in 1883) to serve a normal school (Iowa State Normal School) in the preparation of teachers. Later, these normal schools developed into teachers colleges, preparing educational personnel at both elementary and secondary levels; and laboratory schools flourished, first as "training schools" and later as "campus schools".

But in the 1950's the conditions which had been so favorable for these schools began to change, and in many instances the schools were trapped in operational and philosophical webs that strangled and threatened their very existence. Over the period 1960-1980 nearly half of the nation's laboratory schools were either closed or reduced in scope as they became caught in situations, frequently not their own doing, to which they were unable to respond.

The last decade, however, has seen a period of relative stability. Some institutions have modified or closed laboratory schools but, at the same time, others have initiated the establishment of new ones. And now there is an awakening interest and recognition of need for the unique contributions that laboratory schools can make to the professional preparation of teachers and to improving the quality of teacher education programs. It is imperative that the schools recognize this opportunity and prepare to capitalize on it. Founded upon the new and expanding knowledge base of professional education, laboratory schools must structure clinical and laboratory experiences that will serve as a foundation for, and complement the study of <u>theory</u> in the professional curriculum.

Today I plan to sketch for you a blueprint for laboratory school success. It would be nice to be able to "start from scratch" and establish a school following the guidelines I propose. Unfortunately, most of us are unlikely to have tha opportunity. However, each person having a relationship with a laboratory school, especially those in administrative roles (principals, directors, department heads, deans) has an ongoing responsibility to seek to place the school in increasingly strong positions on campus, in the community, and in the state--operationally, politically, and philosophically. Perhaps this plan can provide some direction in that endeavor.

Of course, there are inherent, unique limitations on every campus that serve to place parameters on what may be accomplished. Nonetheless, I can assure you of the value and validity of the blue print I present and I urge you to consider each element thoughtfully as a potential key to strengthening your laboratory school. In doing so, remember as well that it is far better to <u>create</u> opportunities than it is to <u>await</u> them.

The blue print is the culmination of a career commitment to campus laboratory schools--thirty-nine years--the last twenty-four as director of what demonstrably may be one of the nation's most productive laboratory schools. The plans have been weathered and polished over the past twenty years by the problems and successes of my own school, and by the "big picture", or Gestalt, that I constantly seek to generate from the analysis and synthesis of ever changing forces, ideas, and trends from all areas and levels of education.

Now, the blueprint:

I shall identify and discuss five basic elements of the laboratory school structure: Governance, School Organization and Program Scope, Staffing, Student Population and Enrollment, and School and Faculty Roles and Responsibilities---

Governance:

The administrative status and governance structure established for the operation of the campus laboratory school is vitally important to its success. The school and its faculty can function best when

1) the school has full department status within the college of education
2) the director of the school also is the department head, and reports directly to the dean of the college of education
3) the faculty has full university status, including probation/tenure appointments, faculty rank, comparable salary and fringe benefits, research and sabbatical leaves, and opportunity to serve on college and university committees and to assume professorial roles
4) the school has a separate budget, as other departments of the college and university
5) the school has a complete administrative staff, particularly school principals as appropriate and assistance in the administration of teacher education laboratory responsibilities.
6) a parent council is limited to advisory status.

Clearly this element of the blue print governance, could, and perhaps should be further enhanced, but that is better left to individual schools as they modify the plan to meet individual circumstances.

School Organization and Program Scope:

For optimum performance and success, the laboratory school must recognize openly its "reason for existence". The school is not supported and operated by the university to educate elementary and/or secondary school pupils. Rather, it operates to serve as a laboratory for university programs that prepare educational personnel, and to fulfill other responsibilities which the college or university may have charged to the school.

This is an important philosophical position for the school, and must be understood and accepted by faculty and administrators at both school and university levels, and by parents who enroll their children in school programs. It does not mean that school students and their education are unimportant. It does properly identify priorities, and places in perspective a powerful philosophical position which helps in the justification of the laboratory school. The school carries unique, significant responsibilities to the university and the college of education. To fulfill them, it is necessary that the school operate a comprehensive educational program for elementary and/or secondary students. In fact, it is necessary that the school offer strong programs of instruction for the students; otherwise it cannot be a strong laboratory for university students preparing to enter the education profession. And that is why the laboratory school exists.

In its laboratory role, it is important that insofar as possible the school serve all programs of the university which prepare educational personnel. Thus, the pupil program ideally should span the years prekindergarten through grade twelve, including special education. The curriculum of the school and its extra-

curricular activity program should be comprehensive in scope, providing instruction and pupil services to fulfill simultaneously the educational needs of both school and university students.

The blue print does not call for the school to be a "model school". Operating a model school program was a valuable contribution to elementary and secondary education in an earlier period of development, but today such activity is not a sound use of resources. Moreover, a "model school" is not compatible with service as a teacher education laboratory, and the latter must be the significant role of the laboratory school. Nonetheless, as a teacher education laboratory the school can contribute valuably by modeling in exemplary fashion specific services, structures, and philosophies. Here are four examples:

1) K-12 organization of the school by subject area, with each area chaired by a qualified member of the faculty, can present a model of program articulation of significant value to both undergraduate and graduate students in teacher education.

2) An exemplary school library and media center can make unique contributions to the laboratory, enabling prospective teachers to experience the significant value of such services to both teaching and learning.

3) Exemplary guidance and health services at both elementary and secondary levels can provide prospective teachers the opportunity to study first-hand the contributions of such programs to a successful school learning environment.

4) An exemplary school philosophy, observable in the day-to-day operation of the school--at all levels and in all elements of the school program--can provide a solid foundation for laboratory experiences throughout the school.

Staffing:

A major key to the success of the laboratory school, as is the case with all educational units, lies in the nature and quality of the faculty. Clear expectations must be established for the faculty in the full range of their responsibilities--teaching (both school pupils and university students), experimentation and research, writing and publication, and professional service. Members of the faculty must understand that the conduct of a strong, comprehensive educational program for school pupils is but the necessary foundation for their major responsibility--their "reason for existence"--which is the operation of the teacher education laboratory to serve undergraduate and graduate programs of the university and the conduct of additional laboratory school roles.

Above all, faculty members must be warm, sensitive, and knowledgeable. They must represent the fullest possible range of cultures and classes. They must enjoy teaching and appreciate the unique opportunities present in the laboratory school setting: to teach at both school and university levels, and to contribute simultaneously to the growth of both school pupils and university students. They must be scholars of professional practice, keeping abreast of new developments regarding professional knowledge, and utilizing such information to conduct action research in their instructional setting.

The relationship between faculty and administration must be open, positive, and supportive. The school must have a broad base of leadership from both faculty and administrators, and leadership must be exercised freely through mutual, informal cooperation. The more such leadership is generated, the greater the success of the school in fulfilling its complex role. In turn, this leads to a highly productive faculty and to heightened faculty satisfaction and morale. This professional climate adds significantly to the creative generation of ideas within the school environment, and to success in other roles of the school and its faculty. Moreover, it is the key to attracting and holding strong, productive persons on the school faculty.

Of course, the faculty must have adequate paraprofessional support in order to function successfully in its complex array of professional responsibility. This is true particularly in the elementary school, where the burdens of time are more prevailing because of daily schedule demands.

Student Population and Enrollment Policies:

The role of teacher education laboratory, as is the case with any functional laboratory, calls for the school to include in its enrollment the full range of student subjects. It must operate as a multicultural school, presenting a student body representative of the population as a whole. The school must include the full range of student talents and abilities, and socio-economic classes as well. The more comprehensive the laboratory school enrollment, the more realistically it can serve the full range of laboratory experiences needed in university teacher preparation programs.

School and Faulty Roles and Responsibilities:

School and faculty success in the conduct of assigned roles and responsibilities is a key element in the blue print. Laboratory schools primarily are educational service units, established to provide a pedagogical experience base for the preparation of educational personnel. They are unique agencies in a position to make unique contributions to the development of clinical knowledge and skills. But they can and must be more than that.

As an instructional unit within the university, the school and its faculty carry both the right and the responsibility to participate actively in each of the three commonly held professorial activities of the university: teaching, research, and professional service. Their contributions in the areas of research and professional service can be as singular and unique as those made in the field experience areas traditionally served by laboratory schools. The blue print calls for ongoing commitment and involvement by the school and its faculty in all three of these areas commonly served by university faculty. I shall discuss each area:

1) Teaching (teacher education)

Beginning with the days of the normal school, apprenticeship has been a persisting element in the preparation of teachers. Observing and learning from the "master teacher" in a "model" school environment was the conceived role of the early laboratory school. Unfortunately, teacher educators and teacher education programs have been unable to recognize the fallibility of apprenticeship and to eliminate reliance upon apprenticeship as a philosophical base in teacher education programs. It is ironic that today, at the same time

that new research raises questions about our blind faith in apprentice-type field-based experience and student teaching, action is being taken across the nation to increase these activities in programs of teacher education.

On the other hand, with the development and expansion of the new knowledge base in teacher education, the importance of clinical experience and the development of clinical knowledge and skills is gaining increased recognition. Such leaders in professional education as Smith (1), Broudy (2), and Berliner (3) recently have addressed the value of clinical experiences in the preparation of classroom teachers. Rather than placing an emphasis upon practice, these men recommend that attention be given to the development of skills in analysis, synthesis, reflection, and self-evaluation. Dewey (4) stated that the primary function of student teaching should be to make the student more thoughtful, rather than to gain immediate proficiency. He believed that the emphasis should be on the development of analytic skills, to enable the novice to judge his/her own work. Today, we know so much more about teaching, and we have the information and technology to recognize the value of such statements and make laboratory experiences an effective foundation for pedagogical education.

The potential of this "revolution" in field and laboratory experiences presents a rare and unusual opportunity for campus laboratory schools. Faculty study, research, and development in the area of clinical laboratory experiences can pay large dividends, reestablishing the nucleus of teacher preparation programs, as the center for the development of a laboratory-based field of study, and as the "real" laboratory where the focus upon analytic study and the development of clinical knowledge can become the foundation for understanding

academic pedogogy. My blue print places the highest priority upon this element of laboratory school responsibility.

2) Research (research, development, dissemination)

We can agree upon the uniqueness of laboratory schools. The blue print requires faculty members to take advantage of this quality in the conduct of research. The laboratory setting has so much potential for productivity in this area, the faculty should not devote time to the frequently sterile, isolated investigations often conducted by colleagues in other college and university departments. Laboratory schools are "where the action is", and applied action research, a fully legitimate endeavor, should be the byword.

The developmental activities described earlier in the section on teaching provides the school faculty with excellent opportunities to experiment and do research concerning university students enrolled in clinical experience programs. In turn, faculty expertise in this area will enable the faculty to disseminate this new knowledge and skill to other field experience centers utilized by the university.

"Product-oriented" research and development offers the school faculty another unlimited array of opportunities for success. Contributions in this area can enhance the laboratory school in a number of significant ways: (1) research activity in school curriculum and instructional processes involves the faculty in the study and development of new knowledge, invigorating both the faculty and the pupil program, (2) opportunities can be developed for cooperative research with other university departments, thereby enriching the on-campus status of the laboratory school, (3) pilot and evaluation programs and related

demonstration teaching affords the opportunity to engage elementary or secondary schools throughout the state, resulting in improved relations and recognition, and (4) dissemination of the research-based materials results in gratification for project faculty and brings value and esteem to the laboratory school.

Only laboratory schools in a university setting, operating in the modes presented in this plan, are in a position to function effectively in the area of product-oriented research. My blue print includes this effort in the design of a successful laboratory school.

3) Professional Service (on campus, off campus)

No unit on the university campus is in a better position for success in professional service than the laboratory school. The school and its faculty operate simultaneously in two "worlds", that of the university and that of the public schools. This provides an extraordinary opportunity for the school to provide service and leadership to the state. The "business" of the laboratory school focuses regularly upon teacher education, elementary and secondary school teaching and curriculum, and research and development in curriculum and instruction. These activities relate directly to on-going educational activity in every school in the land, and each school constantly is in search of program improvement.

Despite the potential burden of such activities, it is imperative that faculty members also be available for professorial service to the department, the college, and the university in the ongoing deliberations of committees, councils, and other faculty bodies. While time consuming, such efforts enable the laboratory school to contribute its fair share, to interject a unique

perspective, and to build linkages and relationships that strengthen both the mission and functions of the school.

The blue print requires a commitment to professional service by the school and its faculty through contributions to an extensive array of activities which includes the following:

On-Campus: sponsoring conferences; offering workshops, cooperating with faculty colleagues in course and project development; serving as a resource teacher or consultant; becoming involved in writing and publication as a service activity; teaching special courses or classes; participating in college and university affairs; serving on committees, councils, and other faculty or university bodies, and participating in professional associations.

Off-campus: sponsoring conferences; offering workshops; directing inservice programs; teaching extension classes; being involved in writing and publication; providing leadership to elementary and secondary schools and teacher education through professional associations; giving papers and presentations; serving on educational boards, councils, and committees; acting as resource person or consultant, engaging in research and development activities as a professional service.

In summary:

I have presented a blue print for laboratory school success. There are other designs, I am sure. In fact, it is my judgment that every school must, in the long run, provide its own plan, build its own design to fulfill its mission. You should know, however, that the blue print I have sketched is a proven design, based upon the operation, roles, and achievements of Price Laboratory School

and its energetic, productive faculty. I propose that you study our design, consider its significant elements, and identify those that may present an attractive modification or addition to your own laboratory school. As resident architect, I can assure the availability of our consulting assistance as an ongoing professional service activity.

There is an ancient adage, "opportunity knocks but once". Being an unrelenting optimist, I don't believe that. I think opportunity knocks on our doors over and over again. Often it knocks but softly and we don't hear, other times it knocks more loudly, but we aren't listening. But today--right now--opportunity is knocking loudly, and we had better <u>listen and respond!</u>

More than any time in the last forty years, knowledgeable people in teacher education are recognizing the importance of laboratory experiences in the preparation of educational personnel. They call for a higher level of experience, however, moving away from the conventional apprenticeship approach. A "retooling" of laboratory knowledge and skill is called for, and we need to get with it. Laboratory schools are in position to make a difference, but it will require a very special effort to succeed.

Recently Haberman (5) predicted, "Laboratory schools will be resurrected as special mission elementary and/or secondary schools...", and further that "The 'new' laboratory schools will generate a literature of applied, action research on the day-to-day problems of teachers and schooling". In calling for the creation of pedagogical laboratories, Berliner (6) said, "We need <u>real</u> laboratories in education, just as do chemists, biologists, and physicists who also must learn to experiment while they are in training" and Broudy (7), in

proposing the elements of professional studies stated, "It would be highly desirable for courses in education to incorporate the analog of the laboratory wherever suitable".

I am confident that you will accept this challenge to provide a professionally stimulating, purposeful laboratory for pedogogical education. As you proceed to "remodel" your laboratory school for this effort, and to accommodate other details of this blue print, look to the keystone of the structure. The keystone, of course, is the essential element which serves all others and holds them in place. The keystone of a successful laboratory school is leadership. I urge you to both provide and develop leadership to serve the roles and responsibilities I have discussed for laboratory schools, and to extend that effort to assist your institution in the development of an enlightened teacher education program based upon the modern conception of laboratory experiences.

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